

Oro Valley Historical Society

P.O. Box 69754, Oro Valley AZ 85755

www.ovhistory.org



New Officers Elected by Board of Directors

At the April Board meeting, the following officers were elected:

Jim Horn, President

Al Efron, Vice President

Paul Loomis, Treasurer

Kathi Cuvelier, Secretary

Upcoming Events

June 1

SPR education program

June 23

Board Meeting 3:00 pm- Oro Valley Library

No Board Meeting in July

Summer Program at the Ranch

Board member Joyce Rychener is leading the summer educational program for children at Steam Pump Ranch starting on June 1st. Students will be involved in educational activities at the Ranch and at the BASIS school. It is a STEAM focused program: Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math. See the OV town website for details on this great children's program!

Collections Activities

The board approved a request to fund several committee members to attend the Collections Management Workshop in Denver in June. The Society gained Arizona Historical Society approval as a "certified museum program" on May 13. The Society will apply for a state grant to obtain a safe for storage of valuable materials.

Great Classics Success!

The Great Classics of the Silver Screen was a wonderful evening! W Society netted a profit of \$ 794! Thanks to chair Joyce Rychener and



New Board Members

Our new board members include Thomas Bobnick, Kory Dingle and Henry Zipf. Thomas is an IT systems engineer with Desert Diamond Casino. Kory is a registered architect and general contractor. He is President of Indevco Construction, Inc. Henry is the son of Hank Zipf and a descendant of the Pusch family. Welcome to the board!



From left: Tom Bobnick, Kory Dingle and Henry Zipf

Speaker's Bureau

A series of speakers are set for the coming year at the OV Library, each at 2:00 pm. They will include:

- Oct 12- David Devine – A New Research Tool for 19th c. OV
- Dec. 14- Flint Carter – Buffalo Bill in Oracle, AZ
- Feb. 6- Sandra Chan- The History of the Chinese in Tucson
- April 12- Laura Oyama- Japanese American Internment in Arizona in WWII

Do you have stories or research to share with community groups about Oro Valley or AZ history? We need more speakers! Contact Jim Williams at jaswilliams128@msn.com.

Membership Campaign

The Society is working to expand its membership over the next year. We have gained 75 new members since April 1st! We are offering free memberships for one year. Please encourage your friends to visit our website www.ovhistory.org and join! Jo Di Gennaro is heading the effort to get incentives from local businesses for those who become members. We plan to send membership cards and incentives to all members via email in the coming months.



Celebration of the Oro Valley Historical Society Achievement of "Certified Museum Program"

Volunteering

Why not get involved in the work of the Society? We need docents, garden workers, and many other volunteers. Contact Jo Di Gennaro at JOJOSAMDG@gmail.com if you can help.

Special Event

Mark your calendar to save Saturday, November 12th. The Society will hold a wine garden in conjunction with the Town of Oro Valley's Fall Festival at Steam Pump Ranch. This should be a fun event and a great fundraiser for the Society!

Tales of Yesteryear....

Bootlegging Days

By Jim Williams

Life was hard on the Oro Valley homesteads in the 1920s and '30s. Most homesteaders had between 160 and 640 acres of land, not enough to raise a sizeable number of cattle. When the Great Depression came in 1930, the price of cattle fell by 50%. Many homesteaders had to find new ways to make a living. Some of them turned to bootlegging.

Prohibition began in 1920. It was easy to build a still and hide it in the isolated areas of Oro Valley. Local resident Buster Bailey lived with his parents on a farm along Oracle Road from 1927 to 1931. His parents returned to Texas, but Buster stayed and made a living as a mechanic and farmhand.

Years later, he remembered that it "seemed that about everyone in the area was making whiskey."

Buster and a friend built and operated a still on the Valencia property, near the Santa Catalina Mountains. Most of the work was completed at night, when it was less visible to law enforcement agents. Fires had to be kept low. The most difficult part of the operation was delivering the illegal liquor to Tucson for sale. Federal agents frequently traveled Oracle Road looking for transporters. Bailey and others had to use alternate, dirt roads to go to the city.

Despite the hard work and threat of prosecution, making hooch was well worth it. Bailey recalled that it cost 85 cents to make a gallon of hooch that could be sold for as much as \$22! Prohibition ended in 1933 and with it the glorious era of illegal bootlegging in Oro Valley. The remains of many stills are evident in isolated parts of our area.

Keeping Oro Valley History Alive!